DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 241 454 SP 022 581

AUTHOR Klawunder, Kenneth
TITLE Program Development Essentials.
PUB DATE [83]
NOTE 4p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; Board of Education Role; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; *Mastery Learning; *Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Program Implementation; Staff Role
IDENTIFIERS PF Project

ABSTRACT

Schools which have successfully implemented mastery learning (ML) programs show many similarities in their plans for ML development. These similarities stand out so strongly that knowledge of them can help all schools in planning for ML. The following program commonalities observed during visits to several schools in New York, Washington, Colorado, and Oregon are: (1) change to ML based upon an identified need; (2) initial involvement and dedication of a head administrator; (3) formal board action indicating dedication to ML ideals; (4) evolutionary (slow, methodical) program development; (5) involvement and commitment of teachers; (6) extensive and ongoing staff development; and (7) revision or re-examination of staff evaluation procedures. A true ML program will do the following: diagnose and teach prerequisite skills; teach in two or more modes to an objective; use formative tests to give feedback to teacher and student; reteach using correctives, time, and a new teaching mode; and use criterion-referenced tests for summative evaluation of mastery. (EM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED241454

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIALS

Kenneth Klawunder
Box 251
Valleyford, WA 99036

The Alaska Gateway School District in Tok, Alaska has been interested in implementing an Outcome-Based Instructional System using Mastery Learning (ML) since 1980 when Superintendent Spike Jorgensen and I attended a Network-sponsored workshop on ML in Boulder, Colorado. Having received a partial sabbatical from the school district this year, I am attending Eastern Washington University and travelling to schools which have successfully implemented an ML program. My goal is to plan for the development and implementation of a Mastery Learning program in small schools.

While visiting schools and talking to teachers and administrators I found many similarities in their plans for ML development. These similarities stand out so strongly that knowledge of them should help all schools planning to implement such a program. I gathered information in three general areas. They include:

1. Documentation of successful strategies which have been employed in the creation of a Mastery Learning program that is now operational.
2. Recognition of problems and mistakes which have been made by others.
3. Formulation of a comprehensive and sequential plan for the initiation of an ML program, remembering that small schools are unique.

The important program similarities that follow were not compiled through research but by observation and conversation with staff and administrative personnel in the Johnson City Central Schools in New York; the Educational Service District No. 112 in Vancouver, Washington; District No. 12 in Adams County, Colorado; the Hood River Valley High School in Hood River, Oregon; and the Mukilteo School District in Everett, Washington.

SP022581

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kenneth L. Klawunder

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Change Should Be Based Upon Need.

The development and implementation of a Mastery Learning program demands so much time, cooperation, and commitment on the part of so many that it must be anchored in need. Change for the sake of change may not attract the dedication and tenacity of staff required for success. Several of these districts have been in the process of initiating ML into their schools for ten to twelve years, and they realize that without an identified need it is difficult to retain a focus for the development process.

Dedication By A Head Administrator.

Initial involvement in and dedication to the Mastery Learning program by head administrative personnel is essential to effect change. Program initiation demands so many significant school management alterations and ideological changes in staff attitudes and expectations that any timely modification of school procedures must come through top administrative efforts. It is almost impossible to expect any district-wide change in school operations to come through the initiation of Mastery Learning practices by an individual classroom teacher.

Formal Board Action.

Due to the time and money commitment necessary to effect a change to Mastery Learning, most districts find educating the board and developing their dedication to ML ideals a first step. If Mastery Learning is identified as a solution to the deficiencies of the district and the board becomes knowledgeable about and committed to the program, it is likely that real change will occur.

Board action in the form of policy adoption and resolutions emphasizes the district's direction and power of conviction for change. Without board education and dedication, many of these ML advocates feel that the board might not endure through the evolutionary process and could succumb to pressure groups trying to convince them to abandon the program.

Program Development Must Be Evolutionary.

The operation alteration of the school and particularily attitudinal changes of the individuals involved are so significant that a slow, methodical implementation of Mastery Learning is considered necessary. The methodology used to effect this change varied somewhat across districts, but almost all agree that the old beliefs about students and schools held by many educators and community members must be replaced by a new belief system based upon research compatible with Mastery Learning practice.

Educators in several of these districts felt that implementation of the program today could possibly be cut to five or six years, but it must evolve and should not be thought of as a packaged product that can be purchased and put into operation on September 1.

Teacher Involvement Is Essential.

The change to a Mastery Learning program asks educators to alter the actions that have served and supported them in the past. This involves dropping the security of old beliefs and searching in an unsure environment for new ones. Teachers must see the need for a modification of old strategies, become committed to the change, develop a vested interest in the new program, and be permitted to help steer its development.

Staff Development Is Critical

The change in attitude and strategies is so important that staff members require extensive training. New methods to be employed by teachers in the classroom can be taught rather rapidly, but old, long-standing attitudes about the nature and abilities of students and the process of education will not change easily. These districts have provided preservice training, summer group meetings, in-service training and a variety of university classes to assist staff members in obtaining the skills needed to implement the program.

Most districts felt it necessary to have an "in house" cadre of trainers from the existing staff. Outside consultants, while valuable, may provide so much support that unless someone within the district can carry on, the program collapses once they leave.

Staff Evaluation System.

A Mastery Learning program requires a change that may create a threat to the security of some district personnel. This feeling on the part of staff members, whether real or imagined, must be dealt with before program alterations can make a difference for students in the classroom. Therefore, many felt that some revision or at least re-examination of the staff evaluation procedure was in order.

CONCLUSIONS

The above list of similarities in ML program development is not meant to be complete, nor is it meant to apply to pseudo-mastery learning programs. A true ML program will do the following:

A. Diagnose and teach prerequisite skills.

B. Teach in two or more modes to an objective.

C. Use formative tests to give feedback to teacher and student.

D. Reteach, using correctives, time, and a new teaching mode.

E. Use criterion-referenced tests for the summative evaluation of mastery. These tests should be closely aligned to the objectives taught and the material used.